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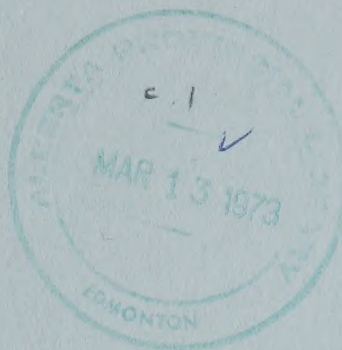
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MANAGING the CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

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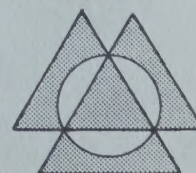
Dr. Walter R. Trost, CHAIRMAN

Alberta
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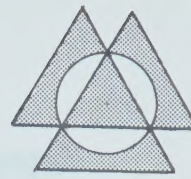
Presented to, 1972 Annual Convention of the
CANADIAN INSTITUTE of MANAGEMENT

JUNE 22, 1972

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MANAGING the CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

A Presentation on
What is Being Done in Alberta with
Respect to Environmental Problems

By Dr. W. R. Trost,
Chairman,
Environment Conservation Authority

For Presentation at
1972 Annual Convention of
The Canadian Institute of Management
Sheraton Mount Royal Hotel
Montreal, P.Q.

June 22, 1972.

MANAGING THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

1. The Province of Alberta

Canada is a fantastic country with endless variations in its environment. Its population is concentrated in many densely packed centres separated by immense empty or sparsely settled areas. Alberta is like the country. Moving from the east to the west the flat and rolling plains of the Province give way to the beauty of the undulating foothills and then to the grand staggering vertical upthrusts of the Rocky Mountains where the rivers rise. From the south to the north, hot arid near-desert country transforms to great reaches of ranch country, then to fertile farmlands and green fields, which in turn are displaced by the limitless expanses of lake and forest country in the middle and northern parts of the Province, until finally in the north where the rivers flow to the Arctic the boundary of permafrost country is reached. Each of these great regions displays its own mix of living species, has its own productivities, problems and possibilities. Of the ten cities, two have half a million people each.

The surface of all of the Province outside the cities is extensively used, for agriculture, for forestry, for recreation. And below the surface, throughout the Province, seam upon seam of coal is found, oil, gas, tar sands and other minerals.

Environmental problems arise when the several species and individuals attempt to make use of the various surface and subsurface resources in ways that are not compatible with each other.

2. The Environment Conservation Authority

To help it deal with the problems of the environment in the Province, the Government of Alberta established the Environment Conservation Authority in 1970 as a Crown corporation to develop an overview of environmental matters. It was to develop public participation, encourage co-ordination among departments of government, and give advice to the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council on policy and legislation relating to the environment.

3. The Department of the Environment

Partly as the result of the advice of the Environment Conservation Authority, the Government of Alberta next established a Department of the Environment to administer environmental programs and to co-ordinate programs that also involve other departments of government. The Department is now fully established and functions well. These two structures, the Authority on the one hand and the Department on the other, enable the Government to develop, co-ordinate and administer environmental legislation and programs through the Department of the Environment, and to relate to all sectors of the public in formulating policy through the Authority. Though the Authority has an arm's length relationship to government, both the Environment Conservation Authority and the Department report to the Minister of the Environment. You will permit me to say that the Authority and the Department were established in Alberta before similar structures appeared in any other part of Canada.

4. Public Participation

Five broad areas receive major emphasis in dealing with environmental problems in Alberta. There is first of all a well developed and continuing emphasis on the role and significance that public participation can have in policy formulation in matters relating to the environment. This is done under the auspices of the Environment Conservation Authority which with the co-operation of the departments of government, the universities and industry, makes information available to the public, and holds public hearings on all important matters relating to the environment. The Authority has also established a system of public advisory committees on the environment, some of them large standing committees, others appointed on an ad hoc basis for particular purposes. The Authority also has established a science advisory committee with membership from the universities and from industry so that what might be called a two-level approach can be used, first at the scientific level and then at the more general level when difficult technical problems are involved in matters relating to the environment. The policy and advice so developed is given wide public circulation and is presented to the Cabinet through the Minister of the Environment. Gaps exist in the three-cornered relationship between public needs and desires, technological feasibility, and the pragmatism of politics. The Authority may be a device by which the sides of the triangle can be considerably shortened.

5. Environmental Management

A second major emphasis in the Province is on environmental management. In Alberta the environmental management of the major resource industries, and of multiple resource management in regions where many different resources co-exist, has been given a considerable emphasis. The Environment Conservation Authority is in the process of holding comprehensive and wide-ranging enquiries through public hearings at the request of the Government into the impact on the environment of coal, oil, gas and forest developments in the Province, as well as enquiries through public hearings into the integrated development of watershed regions like the Canmore Corridor, and industrial zones in urban centres. It is clear that environmental management will produce many new jobs and afford new opportunities for new businesses to be founded. Since much of the resources are exported, the result will be an increase in employment and the retention within the Province of a greater portion of the resource dollar. This is, of course, significant to the economy of the Province. In more general terms the requirements of environment conservation will create a whole new category of employment possibilities for the future, as we complete the cycle of what has up till now been the half circle wherein we produce goods that are used and then discarded. In completing the cycle, these manufactured materials will be used again and then re-used until they are finally returned into the environment in a conformable fashion. Perhaps as many new jobs will be created in closing the cycle as had been generated in opening up the first half.

6. Environmental Economics

Man must both maintain his own livelihood and protect his future. He must maintain a society that functions well and still not imperil his own well-being nor the survival of other living species. Economic analysis of environmental management, including the processes that disturb the environment as well as the disturbances themselves, is an excellent instrument to sharpen up judgement and focus attention on matters of great relevancy. In its essence, environment conservation is an attempt to retain suitable surroundings for living processes, human and non-human, now and for the future. In the economics of living processes, economics and human ecology do not yet combine simply to give easy answers, but that is where the problems are, and where much attention in Alberta is being directed.

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7. Environmental Education

The readaptions that man must make now that he has so densely occupied the surface of the earth, require education inputs to give him the skills and the new attitudes that these new circumstances demand. Environmental education is required, both within the school system at all levels from elementary to university, and outside the formal educational structure, in industry, in government, and in the public at large. In Alberta new programs are being developed in the elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions and in the institutes of technology to provide the understandings and skills that are needed for sound environmental management in the context of the Province.

8. Environmental Legislation

Environmental legislation includes the legislation itself, the regulations that amplify and define the legislation, and the enforcement procedures that follow. In Alberta much interesting and innovative legislation has been passed and is now in the process of being transformed and tested through regulation and enforcement. The Acts establishing the Environment Conservation Authority in 1970 and the Department of the Environment in 1971 were accompanied by The Wilderness Areas Act and The Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and similar suitable legislation. Additional legislation is being put forth this year, including legislation relating to surface reclamation associated with surface mining and other matters relating to resource industries. The Province is also forming up new legislation to protect, conserve and make suitable use of its historical and archaeological resources. New world archaeology is perhaps as far advanced in Alberta as in any part of Canada, and the conservation of these historical resources is a subject of great interest in the Province. The plains against the eastern Rockies were a migration route for people for many thousands of years following and perhaps between the latest ice ages.

9. Conclusion

Though the Province of Alberta is proud of the advances it has recently made through the Department of the Environment and through the Environment Conservation Authority in facing up to its environmental problems, it of course recognizes that the future lies ahead and that much remains to be done. There is some optimism, however, that the machinery to get at the task is now assembled and that a good working relationship exists between the several sectors of the public, the departments of government, and the elected representatives of the people towards defining and achieving environmental goals for the Province. At the same time there is recognition of the need for co-operation with other provinces and with the Federal Government and with the world at large in attaining common goals.

